



Healthy Homes
Healthy Children

Lead Update

Lead Month Report

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This May was the sixth annual celebration of Lead Poisoning Prevention Month in Rhode Island, with a focus on prenatal prevention. A number of organizations joined us in providing outreach and education to prenatal care providers and parents. We are pleased to announce and applaud the recipients of the Lead Excellence Awards of 2004, presented at our May 6th event at the Crowne Plaza:

- ◆ **"Award for Excellence in Lead Screening"** for achieving a screening rate above 96% was presented to Atwood Pediatrics and Bayside Family Healthcare.
- ◆ **"Award for Excellence in Public Health Promotion."** This award was presented to The Honorable Thomas J. Izzo for his dedication and constant effort in the development and passage of the Lead Hazard Mitigation Law; VNA of Care New England for their continuous support of lead poisoning prevention and commitment to the "Keep Your Baby Lead Safe" Program (KYBLS); and the Rhode Island State Energy Office - Weatherization Program for their innovation, creativity, and participation in the KYBLS Program.
- ◆ **Certificates of Appreciation** "in recognition of outstanding efforts and participation in Lead Screening Quality Assurance" were presented to Duane Golomb, MD and Associates; Cranston, Fallon and Horan; San Antonio and Chavarria; David Kerzer, DO University Medical Group; Bald Hill Pediatrics; Bonner, LeConte and Muddiman; Fallon and Horan, DO Inc.; Children's Healthcare, Inc.; Cheryl Flynn, MD; Ocean State Pediatrics; Robert Trivett, MD; and Waterman Pediatrics.
- ◆ **Certificates of Appreciation** "in recognition of outstanding efforts in the 'Keep your Baby Lead Safe' Program were presented to Safety First Home Assistance Repair Program; Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency; Blackstone Valley Community Health Center; Thundermist Health Center; City of Providence Lead Hazard Reduction Program; and the Providence Community Health Centers.

Prenatal Lead Exposure: Cause for Concern?

At this year's Lead Poisoning Prevention Month Awards Event, Dr. Morri Markowitz delivered a keynote address highlighting the dangers of prenatal lead exposure. Dr. Markowitz discussed the dangers of both lead exposure during pregnancy as well as lead in bone and tissue stores that women accumulate over their lifetime. During pregnancy, lead in bone and tissue stores can be mobilized, cross the placenta, and have harmful effects on the fetus. Some of these effects could include prematurity, decreased size, congenital anomalies, and diminished cognitive abilities. Dr. Markowitz highlighted risk groups for providers to be aware of, including: pregnant women who have occupational exposure, women who have recently immigrated from a country with high lead use, women who use folk remedies that contain lead, women whose homes are undergoing renovation, and women who engage in pica behavior during pregnancy. Dr. Markowitz recommends conducting a study to collect prevalence data among pregnant women in RI. These data could be used to determine the feasibility and cost of prenatal screening in order to inform the provider community and would help assess the need for universal screening for this population. The state will then be capable to more accurately design guidelines for prenatal screening that are reasonable and useful in preventing prenatal lead exposure. Dr. Markowitz also presented at the Women and Infants Hospital Grand Rounds this May, and the Department of Health is holding preliminary discussions to assess resources, methods and feasibility of conducting a prevalence study.

DOH Provides Lists of Lead Professionals to assist with Mitigation Compliance

The Department of Health has posted lists of licensed lead professionals on its website at lead.health.ri.gov/links.php. The lists published on the web were reviewed to include only the names and updated contact information of licensed inspectors and inspector technicians who are currently willing to do private sector work. The individuals listed are licensed to conduct clearance inspections required under the Lead Hazard Mitigation Law and therefore issue "Certificates of Conformance", as well as "Lead Safe/Free Certificates" under the Rules and Regulations for Lead Poisoning Prevention.

In order to ensure a sufficient pool of licensed individuals to conduct Mitigation inspections under Housing Resources Commission jurisdiction, the HRC has decided that there is no apprenticeship required for an environmental lead inspector technician to perform the visual inspection and issue a Certificate of Conformance.

The Department of Health is currently amending the Rules and Regulations for Lead Poisoning Prevention. Proposed changes are primarily being made to make minor adjustments to ensure concordance with the Lead Hazard Mitigation Law. The two significant proposed changes to the Regulations are to:

- Provide incentives for licensed lead inspectors to supervise apprenticeships; and,
- Require that "start work notifications" be submitted for Lead Hazard Control activities.

A public review of the draft Regulations is planned for the last week of June. For additional information on the proposed amendments, contact Rosemary Aglione at RosemaryA@doh.state.ri.us or (401) 222-2438.